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Talking Points for the DCI
(2 September 1983)

Prognosis on Lebanon

Prospects for continued factional violence are high. The Army probably will not be able to operate successfully in both West Beirut and the Shuf-Alayh region.

-- Most of the Muslims fighters in Beirut apparently eluded the Army sweeps, and many are eager to resume attacks against Army units.

-- The Army has still not entered in force the Shia Muslim slums south of the city. If it does, heavy street fighting is again likely, the Druze fighters probably will resume shelling Beirut in support of Shia militias.

-- The Druze now are likely to offer even stiffer resistance to the Army deployment into the Shuf-Alayh region.

-- The risk of more MNF casualties--particularly US--is high. Druze and Shia fighters believe US played significant role in Lebanese Army operations this week. 25X1

Prospects for resolving confessional problems are poor, and Gemayel's position now depends largely on the Army's performance and cohesion.

-- Druze leader Walid Junblatt and Shia spokesman Nabih Barri believe that the government used recent talks to buy time for the Army's offensive.

-- Barri and Junblatt's support among their respective groups is high. Many Muslims and Druze believe recent government actions reflect Gemayel's desire to preserve Christian political domination.

-- Gemayel's problems with the Phalange Party and the Christian Lebanese Forces militia have probably eased for the time being because his current tough approach suits Phalange interests. 25X1

Army Cohesion

The Lebanese Army appears to be generally intact, but continuing Army moves against Muslim fighters in Beirut and, eventually, in the Shuf region, will further test the loyalties of the Army's Muslims troops.

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-- An unknown number of Shia soldiers reportedly deserted the Army earlier this week and joined the Shia Amal militia.

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Muslim troops may desert in large numbers if Army moves in West Beirut and the Shuf-Alayh region remain focused on Muslim and Druze adversaries.

-- Plans to deploy the Army's strongest units--now in Beirut--into the Shuf will encourage Muslim militia attacks on Army units remaining in the capital.

-- Druze fighters using guerrilla tactics, probably will put up stiff resistance to the Army's move into the Shuf.

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The survival of the Gemayel government probably depends on the ability of the Lebanese Army to maintain order in West Beirut.

-- Army units remaining in West Beirut will have difficulty keeping the lid on the explosive situation in the capital.

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Syrian Intentions

Clashes in the Shuf after the Israelis withdraw would almost certainly prompt greater Syrian involvement. Damascus' mid-term options include:

-- providing increased support to the Druze militia;

-- pressing the Shia and other pro-Syrian militias in Beirut to stir up fighting in the city to divert LAF units

-- deploying Syrian troops in Druze uniforms in direct support of its allies in the Shuf and Alayh

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indicates Damascus is prepared

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to send up to 10,000 men.

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The Syrians will probably use the opposition National Salvation Front to increase political pressure on Gemayel. The Syrians and their Lebanese allies will deny the legitimacy of the current regime and probably will call for new power-sharing arrangements and a new government of political leaders that would be responsive to Syrian interests.

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Israeli Intentions

Begin's departure is likely to have little immediate impact on Israel's Lebanon policy.

-- There is no indication that Shamir plans any significant departures. He said yesterday that his main goal will be to get Israeli troops out of Lebanon while insuring the security of the north. We expect Arens, for at least the near term, to continue to play the major role in Lebanon policy.

-- In the longer term, much will depend on Sharon's influence in the new government. If he is given an influential post, Israeli policy will become more hardline. [redacted] 25X1

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